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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 36th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 121: UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM (continued) (E/1993/119 and Add.1; A/50/30 and Add.1; A/51/30; A/C.5/50/23; A/C.5/51/24 and A/C.5/51/25 and Corr.1)

AGENDA ITEM 122: UNITED NATIONS PENSION SYSTEM (continued) (A/51/9 and Corr.1 and A/51/644; A/C.5/51/4)

1. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said that his delegation had been astounded to read in document A/50/30/Add.1 (para. 7) that the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) had concluded that concerns regarding dominance reduction and the inclusion of bonuses in margin calculations were a matter of concern to a small minority. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) itself, noting the negative views expressed by delegations which had addressed those elements, had inferred that those which had not expressed themselves - the silent majority - had no reservations about its approach. The Commission, however, had been requested to take into account the views expressed by Member States, not to read what it wished into the silence of others. Furthermore, since General Assembly resolution 50/208 had been adopted without a vote, it was not appropriate to characterize the views of any group of delegations as belonging to a majority or a minority.

2. The equal weighting approach was fundamentally flawed and a distortion of the comparator. The reduction of dominance was a broad policy issue not endorsed by Member States. By using the equal weighting method to reduce the dominance of the United States federal civil service General Schedule, the Commission was taking into account a few special pay systems with higher rates applicable to a minority of staff, and was putting them on an equal footing with other larger pay systems, thus undermining the basis for any real comparison. Continued use of weighted distribution was more appropriate and more accurately reflected the conditions of the United States federal civil service.

3. His delegation did not agree with a change in methodology which would give an across-the-board increase in order to solve a problem isolated to relatively few specialized occupations. The Secretariat had not provided convincing evidence of widespread recruitment and retention problems, although there might well be specific cases of occupational and geographical distribution problems. It might be time to implement the principle of special occupational rates, endorsed by the General Assembly some years earlier.

4. It was inappropriate to include bonuses and performance pay awards in margin calculations when they were not included in the base pay or pensionable remuneration of the comparator; their inclusion in the calculation of the base/floor salary would make them part of pensionable remuneration at the United Nations. Most United States federal civil servants did not receive bonuses or performance awards. While his delegation was in favour of changing the United Nations system so that it could allow for the payment of performance-based bonuses, it currently did not do so.

5. The Commission's approach seemed to be based on an a priori conclusion that base salaries should be increased. The Commission insisted that there was a

need to restore competitiveness, but his delegation was not convinced that it had been lost.

6. Had that unsound methodology not been used, the margin, calculated under the previous methodology, would have been about 114, giving no basis for an increase. At a time of financial constraint, his delegation would not agree to any increase in the base/floor salary.

7. The post adjustment system should operate only to compensate for price differentials between duty stations. However, because the index for New York, the base city, was also adjusted, the system operated as an across-the-board cost-of-living adjustment mechanism. Increases to the base city index should thus not be automatic, but should be subject to General Assembly approval. The proposed increase in base/floor pay could not be looked at in isolation. Increases in post adjustment indices provided staff with automatic cost-of-living increases, and when the base/floor salary was increased it also triggered an increase in related allowances. In that connection, he welcomed the Commission's recommendation that hazard pay should be delinked from the base/floor salary (A/51/30, para. 305).

8. The way in which the Noblemaire and Flemming principles were implemented should be reviewed. The significant overlap between General Service and Professional salaries was an obvious anomaly, and his delegation questioned the high salary levels of some General Service staff. Account should be taken of remuneration in diplomatic missions, transnational organizations and other public sector organizations, which competed for the same type of human resources.

9. His delegation, like those of the European Union and many others, was a strong supporter of the common system and the Noblemaire principle. However, it was unfair to compare the common system with unrepresentative specialized agencies and pay systems. Moreover, salary was only one part of any human resource strategy to motivate staff; proper delegation of authority and good management practices, including fair recruitment, performance appraisal and promotion systems, could do much to attract, motivate and retain people.

10. Mr. GODA (Japan) said, with reference to the common system, that the recruitment and retention of highly competent Secretariat personnel were essential to the efficient and effective operation of the Organization. To that end, and to promote equitable geographical distribution, appropriate working conditions must be maintained. The Noblemaire principle, which was derived from Article 101.3 of the Charter, was the established basis for determining the working conditions of the Professional and higher categories. The Secretariat needed to ensure that it continued to meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity.

11. The International Civil Service Commission had not responded adequately to the reservations which his delegation had raised the previous year regarding grade equivalencies and the elimination of dominance in the comparison with the United States federal civil service. The present methodology should be retained; in that connection, he noted the view recorded in paragraph 141 of the ICSC report (A/51/30). His delegation was in favour of a larger increase in the salary scale at the D-1 and D-2 levels, where the problem of competitiveness was

more serious. It was also ready to accept the Commission's recommendations on staff assessment rates (A/51/30, para. 154).

12. On the issue of post adjustment, he was gratified to note the Commission's decision regarding the out-of-area expenditure weight (para. 188). In view of the overly complex nature of the current post adjustment system, the Commission should continue to review it. His delegation regretted that ICSC had been unable to establish a single post adjustment index for Geneva, as requested by the General Assembly, and it took note of the Commission's position on cost-of-living surveys at headquarters duty stations and Washington, D.C. It also welcomed the establishment of administrative controls to ensure that direct payments of dependency allowances by Governments to common system staff were taken into account in determining payment amounts to staff members.

13. The current systems for determining the salaries of staff in the Professional and higher categories and in the General Service and other locally recruited categories had caused overlapping of remuneration between the two groups; that matter should be addressed if the consistency of the overall salary regime was to be maintained in the common system organizations. The Commission should examine the Flemming principle from the perspective of the salary system as a whole. His delegation therefore welcomed the establishment of working groups to review General Service survey methodologies. ICSC should report on the issue at the earliest opportunity, and no later than the fifty-third session.

14. His delegation supported the Commission's recommendations on the education grant (para. 230) and looked forward to the conclusion of the in-depth review in 1997. It took note of the Commission's comments on appointments of limited duration, an issue which needed careful review.

15. Rotation of staff was an important component in human resources management; the mobility and hardship scheme should ensure that rotation was smooth and that qualified staff were recruited and retained from all Member States. His delegation supported the Commission's decision that a time limit should be set for the payment of the non-removal element of the mobility and hardship allowance. The Commission had not, however, justified its view that the current linkage between the base/floor salary and the mobility and hardship allowance should be retained.

16. With regard to pensionable remuneration, the phenomenon of income inversion between the General Service and the Professional and higher categories was not justified and should be eliminated. His delegation supported the Commission's recommendations regarding the methodology for determining pensionable remuneration (paras. 54 and 66), and welcomed the development of a common staff assessment scale for both categories, as well as the Commission's recommendations thereon (paras. 105 to 108). His delegation was also in favour of the special index for pensioners.

17. His delegation took note with serious concern of chapter VIII of the Commission's report, since it attached great importance to the effective operation of the common system, which helped to eliminate unnecessary competition in the recruitment of personnel, promote cooperation and interchange

of staff among participating organizations, and enhance cost-effective human resources management.

18. He reiterated the importance of maintaining appropriate working conditions for the staff of participating organizations if they were to operate effectively. Expenditure relating to staff costs constituted a substantial portion of the budget of participating organizations. He therefore urged the Secretariat to continue to absorb the financial implications to the fullest extent possible.

19. Turning to the United Nations pension system, he supported the conclusions of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board on the interest rate applicable to lump-sum commutations of periodic benefits (A/51/9, para. 63). He noted with satisfaction the performance of investments, and welcomed the action taken by the Pension Board on the recommendations of the Board of Auditors.

20. He was gratified to note the Pension Board's comments on the monitoring of the costs of recent modifications of the two-track feature of the pension adjustment system. The Board should continue to monitor implementation of the measures, particularly as they related to costs/savings. With regard to the issue of the determination of local currency track pension amounts in countries where significant charges had been introduced in the relationship between the local currency and the United States dollar, his delegation supported the position and shared the concern of the governing bodies set out in paragraph 219 of the Board's report.

21. His delegation supported the Board's conclusion regarding the procedure for determining final average remuneration, and welcomed the review by the Board of the possibility of suspending benefits in case of re-employment in a member organization of the Fund. It took note of the Board's conclusions on entitlement to survivors' benefits for spouses and former spouses, and of the possible withdrawal of the Interim Commission for the International Trade Organization/General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (ICITO/GATT) from membership in the Fund.

22. With respect to administrative expenses, his delegation supported the Board's conclusions on posts and other matters, as well as its decision on a long-term support arrangement for the Fund's secretariat (para. 334).

23. In conclusion, his delegation expressed its appreciation to the Board and the Fund secretariat for their work in ensuring the smooth operation of the pension system, which was an important component of the remuneration of international civil servants.

24. Mr. BOGAYEVSKY (Ukraine) said that the Governments of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had concluded Agreements with the Board concerning the transfer of pension rights with a view to ensuring their continuity, agreements which had been approved by the General Assembly, and had become effective on 1 January 1981. Under the Agreements, Fund participants from those three Member States, before terminating their international service, had had to transfer the actuarial equivalent of their pension entitlements to the Social Security Fund

of the Soviet Union, in accordance with their domestic legislation. As a result they had ceased to be entitled to Fund benefits.

25. The Ukrainian SSR had been compelled to sign the Transfer Agreement with the Pension Board although its pension system had been an integral part of that of the former Soviet Union. The authorities in Moscow had then transferred the money earned by Ukrainian staff members to the central budget of the former Soviet Union. None of those sums had ever been returned to the competent authorities of the Ukrainian SSR or, later, of Ukraine. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Secretary of the Fund had, effective January 1992, suspended the processing of transfers under the three Agreements, pending clarification of their status.

26. In recent years, the Pension Fund had received a growing number of petitions from former participants who had been citizens of the former Soviet Union, including some from Ukraine, stating that the transfer of their pension rights under the Agreements had not resulted in the commensurate increases in their national pension benefits that should have been granted. The Pension Fund secretariat had decided that the sums credited to the USSR State budget should be returned and that the pension rights of the former participants in the Fund should be re-established in full.

27. The Secretary of the Fund had intensified negotiations with the relevant Russian authorities and the General Assembly, in resolution 49/224, had noted the transfer by the fund to the Social Security Fund of the former USSR of the actuarial value of the pension rights accrued by individual former participants, as required under the Agreements.

28. As one of the successor States to the former USSR, the Russian Federation had assumed legal responsibility for the rights and duties of the USSR under the Charter of the United Nations, including its financial obligations. It followed that the Russian Federation had a legal obligation arising from the funds credited to the State budget of the USSR on behalf of all former participants in the Pension Fund under the three Agreements. In simple terms, the money of the former participants had been transferred to Moscow and had been inherited by the Russian Federation.

29. On that basis, his country had expected the Russian Federation, which had succeeded to the membership of the former USSR in the United Nations, to take responsibility for the overall solution of the pension problem, especially its financial implications. Unfortunately, a decision had been taken in Moscow to propose not a comprehensive decision acceptable to all parties, but a financial arrangement that would cover the interests only of a certain number of former participants in the Fund who were currently citizens of the Russian Federation. The Secretary of the Fund had initially tried to seek a solution that would address the problems of all former participants, regardless of their nationality, place of residence or length of service, who had transferred their accrued Pension Fund rights under the three Agreements. However, the Russian authorities had insisted that they could only enter into an agreement with respect to citizens of the Russian Federation. The secretariat of the Fund and the Board had accepted the position of the Russian Federation but had presented the proposed agreement as a breakthrough towards the objective of resolving the claims of all former participants concerned. In so doing, they were

legitimizing a financial arrangement with the Russian Federation which was incompatible with the Regulations of the Fund.

30. In the view of his delegation, the proposed agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board which was now under consideration by the Fifth Committee, far from being a step towards a comprehensive solution of the problems involved, was, in reality, an unfair arrangement which deprived former participants in the Pension Fund currently residing in countries other than the Russian Federation of any possibility of receiving pension benefits as a result of their former employment in the international civil service.

31. The Chairman of the Joint Staff Pension Board, in his statement to the Committee at its 32nd meeting, had referred to discussions with the Government of the Russian Federation and to an agreement to follow a step-by-step approach in addressing the concerns of all former participants in the Fund from the former USSR, Ukrainian SSR and Byelorussian SSR, but he had omitted to mention that the Government of Ukraine, in its efforts to protect the relatively small number of Ukrainian citizens concerned, had failed to secure any cooperation from the Russian authorities. Agreement between the Pension Board and the Government of the Russian Federation had been reached in Moscow without the participation of Ukraine and in a form that his country found totally unacceptable. The so-called step-by-step approach was, in fact, a dubious financial arrangement covering a small category of Russian citizens and was an attempt to shift responsibility for the financial implications of the pension problem from the Russian Federation to other States, including Ukraine, which had never received any of the money that had been transferred from the Pension Fund to the Social Security Fund of the former USSR. It was most regrettable that, under pressure from the Russian authorities, the Secretary of the Fund and the Board had reached the conclusion that each of the countries concerned should pursue separate arrangements with the Fund concerning their own citizens and that the financial arrangements with regard to the actuarial costs of such agreements should also be borne by the States concerned. That arrangement had been agreed despite the well-known fact that the Russian authorities had systematically failed to respond to proposals by Ukraine to enter into negotiations on the matter.

32. Accordingly, it was clear to his Government that the proposed agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Pension Board was incompatible with article 34 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which provided that no treaty should create either obligations or rights for a third State without its consent. In the view of his delegation, the Secretary of the Fund had therefore misinformed the Committee in saying that the proposed agreement was fully consistent with the requirements of international law.

33. In its efforts to find a comprehensive solution to the problem of re-establishing the rights of former participants in the Pension Fund, his Government had requested ACABQ to seek independent advice on the matter. Unfortunately, the Advisory Committee's report did not even refer to the problem raised by Ukraine.

34. His Government remained convinced that the solution to the pension problem should cover the sums remitted on behalf of former participants in the Pension

Fund, regardless of their present countries of residence. He urged the Committee to focus its attention on the pension problem with a view to taking a balanced decision that would respect the interests of all the parties concerned.

35. Mr. BLUKIS (Latvia), referring to the information provided by the Secretary of the Pension Board, said that his country had an interest in the proposed transfer agreement because one of the beneficiaries might be residing in Latvia. His delegation reserved the right to address that issue at a later stage.

AGENDA ITEM 115: IMPROVING THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/51/515)

36. Mr. JAREMCZUK (Poland) said the practice of the Under Secretary-General for Administration and Management, providing the Committee with regular information on the cash flow situation in the United Nations had helped to heighten the Member States' awareness of the real dimensions of the financial crisis and of its practical consequences for the Organization.

37. In setting up the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, the General Assembly in resolution 49/143, had also decided to consider additional measures aimed at ensuring a sound and viable financial basis for the Organization in order to prevent the recurrence of another similar crisis in the future. In paragraph 32 of its first report (A/49/43), the Working Group had noted the suggestions of Member States that studies might be undertaken on innovative approaches to raising funds. That had encouraged his Government, which attached great importance to the solution of the current crisis, to take the issue seriously, since it held the view that, while traditional sources of financing the United Nations should be improved, efforts should also be made to devise new methods. In that connection, it considered that funds might be sought from the private sector.

38. The President of Poland, in an address to the General Assembly at the current session, had put forward a proposal for the creation of a United Nations trust fund which would consist of payments made voluntarily by the transnational private business sector, mainly in the form of tax-free donations. The implementation of that idea would require either strong joint action by the Member States or close cooperation between transnational corporations and their host Governments in order to work out conditions, such as tax reductions or other possible incentives, which might induce the private sector to contribute funds. Control over the allocation of those funds would, however, remain with the Governments and no conditions could be imposed by the donors.

39. His delegation was convinced that the idea deserved the attention of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations, and suggested that, if the idea met with a positive response, it might be referred to the Economic and Social Council for further development as a significant component of an overall solution to the financial crisis.

40. Mr. AL-MUSHIRI (Qatar) said that his Government associated itself with the alarm expressed by other Member States concerning the financial crisis facing the United Nations, which impaired its performance and threatened its very existence; the Organization could not carry out its work without being able to rely on secure sources of funding. During the celebrations of the fiftieth

anniversary of the Organization at the previous session, the Heads of State and Government had drawn attention to the gravity of the financial situation and to the need to address it, but so far the solution had remained elusive. His Government felt that comprehensive financial reform was essential in order to ensure the long-term financial stability of the United Nations.

41. One of the principal aspects of reform was reconsideration of the scale of assessments in order to ensure that the assessments reflected the capacity of each Member State to pay. Any system that was set up in the future to determine assessments must be equitable, transparent and flexible in order to be able to adapt to changing economic circumstances. In that connection, his Government endorsed the conclusions of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the non-aligned countries to the effect that capacity to pay must remain the basic criterion underpinning any reconsideration of the methodology for apportioning the expenses of the Organization, and that any revision of the methodology must be based on consensus and consultation and not on unilateral measures. The scale of assessments should also clearly reflect the responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council and the economic situation faced by other States, in particular the developing countries.

42. One of the reasons for the current financial crisis was the failure of certain major developed countries to pay their assessed contributions to the regular budget, and to the peacekeeping budgets, in full and on time. Those States should pay off their arrears and their current assessments in full, promptly and without conditions so that the arrears could not be used as a means of precipitating reforms.

43. His Government welcomed new mechanisms for funding and for improved financial management and supported the current reforms of the administrative and financial structure which had the potential to alleviate the financial burdens of the Organization. However, the objective of the reform must be to improve performance; the downsizing of the Secretariat must be designed to make it more efficient and less bureaucratic and should not lead to any impairment of its effectiveness. Similarly, savings should not be made by reducing or postponing mandated programmes and activities, particularly development-related activities and programmes, and activities for the benefit of the developing countries.

44. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico), supported by Mr. BLUKIS (Latvia), expressed surprise at the lack of updated information on the financial situation of the Organization. The most recent information that had been provided had been contained in document A/51/515 dated 17 October 1996. Her delegation hoped that the Secretariat would pursue the practice, followed at the previous session of the General Assembly, of providing an official document at monthly intervals giving updated information on the situation. Her delegation had learnt that a sum of about $40 million had recently been paid to the Organization by the Russian Federation; the source of that information, however, had been the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation, and she felt it was unfortunate that the information had not come from the Secretariat. She asked when the Secretariat intended to provide updated information on the Organization's cash situation.

45. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee) assured the representative of Mexico that the practice that had been introduced the previous year was still in force but that no fresh information had been available. The Under-

Secretary-General for Administration and Management would be addressing the Committee shortly on the financial situation of the Organization and would refer to a number of matters affecting the United States as well as the Russian Federation in that connection.

46. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that her delegation looked forward to participating in the discussion on the information to be provided by the Under-Secretary-General, but felt that such information should be provided in official documents rather than in oral briefings.

47. Mr. HANSON (Canada) said that the information to be provided by the Under-Secretary-General would be a welcome supplement to the information already provided on a regular basis by the Secretariat in the monthly publication on the status of contributions and in the summary document that appeared on the 15th of every month.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (A/51/3, (Parts I and II))

48. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider the chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council for the year 1996 (A/51/3 (Parts I and II)), which had been allocated to the Fifth Committee for consideration, namely, chapters I, V (sections E and G) and VII.

49. Since there were no comments, he suggested that the Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the chapters of the report of the Economic and Social Council which had been allocated to the Fifth Committee.

50. It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

51. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee would hear oral reports by the coordinators of the informal consultations on specific agenda items.

52. Mr. STEIN (Germany), Vice-Chairman, speaking as the coordinator for agenda item 116 (Programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997), said that the Committee was still awaiting several reports of the Secretary-General on the item and that it could not take any decisions until those reports had been issued. Little progress had been made on the report on savings (A/C.5/50/57 and Add.1); the proposals with respect to vacancy rates and involuntary separations were still being debated. The other main topics of discussion to date had been, first, the inclusion of the phrase "within existing resources" in resolutions of the General Assembly and, second, appropriations for the International Seabed Authority. A draft resolution had been prepared on the latter issue, but it could not be finalized until the Committee had considered the first performance report on the programme budget, which was not yet available. The timetable for the remaining informal consultations would depend on the Secretariat's input. Although time was short, he was hopeful that the Committee's work would be successfully concluded by the end of the year.

53. Mr. ALOM (Bangladesh), Vice-Chairman, speaking as the coordinator for agenda items 114 (Programme planning) and 118 (Pattern of conferences), said that four rounds of informal consultations had been held on the proposed medium-term plan and that consensus had been reached on all of the 25 programmes under consideration with the exception of programmes 1 (Political affairs), 9 (Trade and development), 19 (Human rights), 24 (Administrative services) and 25 (Internal oversight). With respect to the pattern of conferences, negotiations were under way on the relevant draft resolutions, the most important parts of which had already been agreed upon. The main outstanding issues concerned two Muslim holidays (Id al-Adha and Id al-Fitr) and the additional meetings scheduled. He expected that those issues would be resolved during the informal consultations scheduled for the following day.

54. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine), Rapporteur, speaking as the coordinator for agenda item 120 (Human resources management), said that nine rounds of informal consultations had been held on the item in question. The Committee had adopted a decision concerning the employment of retirees after the first three rounds, and the remaining six rounds had been devoted to the preparation of a draft omnibus resolution on human resources management. Instead of spending time on question-and-answer sessions with representatives of the Office of Human Resources Management, the Committee should focus on completing its work on item 120 in order to provide political guidance to that Office.

55. Mr. BLUKIS (Latvia), speaking as the coordinator for agenda item 111 (Financial reports and audited financial statements, and reports of the Board of Auditors), said that the consideration of item 111 was complicated by the fact that the relevant documentation was voluminous, comprising some 2,000 pages. At two informal meetings, representatives of the Board of Auditors, the specialized agencies and the Secretariat had answered questions posed by delegations. The remaining questions should be answered in the next round of informal consultations, after which the relevant draft resolution would be considered. The major issues on which the discussions would probably focus were the implementation of recommendations and the change in the terms of the members of the Board of Auditors.

56. Mrs. ARAGON (Philippines), speaking as the coordinator for agenda item 141 (Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services), said that the Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services had participated in a constructive dialogue during the first round of informal consultations on item 141 and that he had clarified a number of issues raised by delegations; he would also provide further information in writing. In addition, the Committee had discussed some elements of the relevant draft resolution, and she hoped that the discussions could be concluded during the next round of informal consultations.

57. The CHAIRMAN said that the coordinators would need the full support of all delegations in order to guide the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. He trusted that the statements made in the formal meetings of the Committee would be duly reflected in the draft resolutions being prepared. Moreover, he urged the Secretariat to cooperate by giving precise answers to the questions put by delegations, since the Committee had little time to spare for question-and-answer sessions.

58. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that she was concerned about the timetable for the remaining informal consultations on a number of important agenda items. In particular, only one informal meeting on the scale of assessments had been scheduled for the current week, even though the Committee had spent considerable time on the issue in its formal meetings. The scale of assessments, the proposed medium-term plan, the programme budget, the budget outline and the pattern of conferences were vital issues on which the United Nations Secretariat needed guidance and on which decisions of the General Assembly were urgently needed. She therefore hoped that more meetings would be scheduled on those items, which could not be carried over until the General Assembly resumed its work in the spring. With respect to the Canadian representative's reference to the monthly publications on the Organization's finances, she stressed that such publications were only press releases and not documents of the General Assembly. As a principal organ of the United Nations, the Assembly should be formally apprised of the Organization's cash flow situation.

59. Mr. MUCHANGA (Zambia) said that informal consultations had not yet been scheduled on several agenda items, and he asked the Committee secretariat to prepare a timetable for the consideration of those items. In particular, he asked when the Committee would hold informal consultations on item 140 (Administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations).

60. Mr. ACAKPO-SATCHIVI (Secretary of the Committee) said that informal consultations on agenda item 140 had been scheduled for Monday, 9 December 1996.

61. Ms. INCERA (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that she, too, was concerned about the timetable for the Committee's work, which had provided for very few meetings on a number of important agenda items. In particular, only one meeting had been scheduled on the scale of assessments. Moreover, some of the reports on those items had not been issued. The Group of 77 and China were working intensively to ensure that resolutions could be adopted by the end of the current session on key items such as the programme budget, the budget outline, programme planning, the scale of assessments and the pattern of conferences.

62. Mr. DROZDOV (Ukraine) said that he shared the concerns expressed by the representative of Mexico and by other delegations about the timetable for the informal consultations on the scale of assessments, since a decision on the issue must be taken in a timely manner.

63. The CHAIRMAN suggested that delegations should express their concerns to the coordinator for agenda item 119 (Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations) during the informal consultations to be held that afternoon.

64. Ms. BUERGO RODRÍGUEZ (Cuba) said that she shared the views expressed by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In relation to the questions which had arisen on agenda item 116, her delegation had decided to participate in informal consultations, on the understanding that the item could be taken up again in a formal meeting. Accordingly, she asked whether the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management could

address her delegation's remaining concerns about the Efficiency Board at the Committee's next formal meeting.

65. The CHAIRMAN said that he would inform the Under-Secretary-General that the Committee had additional questions. In preparing the tentative programme of work, the Committee secretariat tried to take the concerns of delegations into account. The Committee was playing a central role during the current session of the General Assembly, since it was dealing with some major issues which could not be addressed without a concerted effort on the part of all delegations. On behalf of the Committee, he exhorted the coordinators to redouble their efforts in the next few days in order to achieve satisfactory results in their, consultations.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.